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PROTESTERS WILL BE DECLARED 'ENEMY OF GOD', WARNS IRAN

Iran's attorney general Mohammad Movahedi Azad warned on Saturday those taking part in protests will be considered 'enemy of God'

NEW MASS RALLIES GRIP MAJOR CITIES

"Prosecutors must carefully and without delay prepare the grounds for the trial and decisive confrontation with those who seek foreign domination over the country," a statement read. 'Enemy of God' is a death penalty charge in Iran. The two-week-old protests showed no signs of slowing, with major cities hit by new mass rallies on Saturday

ACTIVISTS WARN OF INTENSIFYING CRACKDOWN

- The toll has gone up to 65, according to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. Activists said they fear the authorities are intensifying their suppression under cover of internet blackout
- The attorney general's statement comes a day after the US reiterated its warning against violent crackdown on protesters | P11

2,300

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE DETAINED BY IRANIAN FORCES AS PER U.S. SOURCES

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

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UNSUSTAINABLE

Don wants to cap credit card rate at 10% from Jan 20

Banks say it would cut credit access to retail customers in a big way

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @Mumbai

AMID plunging popularity ratings, US President **Donald Trump** on Saturday ordered a cap on interest rates on credit card dues at 10% for a year. The new rate will be effective from January 20, which coincides with completion of Trump's one year as president.

Making the announcement, the president said he will no longer let Americans be "ripped off" by credit card companies, which charge about 20-30% annually on credit card debts.

While economists and analysts globally called it unsustainable, banks said it would lead to massive pullback of credit access to retail customers. US hedge fund manager Bill Ackman said: "My concern about capping rates at 10% is that doing so will inevitably cause millions of Americans to have their cards cancelled as credit card companies lose the ability to adequately price subprime credit risk. Consumers denied credit cards will be forced to turn to loan sharks whose rates and terms will be vastly worse for borrowers."

The move comes amid rising household debt in the US, which jumped by by $197 billion to reach $18.59 trillion in the third quarter. As for credit card balances , they rose by $24 billion from the previous quarter and stood at $1.23 trillion.

Though no Indian card issuer chose to react, analysts this newspaper spoke to rubbished the idea as "a wild call that strikes at the very root of free markets and markets-driven interest rate regime". In India, credit cards charge anywhere from 36-40% annually. "If you don't charge a risk premium on a completely risky loan/unsecured product like credit card, how can a bank continue to be in business? Even in the US, the effective interest rate is around 7% now and with addition of staff cost, interest cost on the money being lent through credit card, a pricing of 10% is simply not sustainable," an analyst said.

ED goes to SC against Didi on I-PAC, WB files caveat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi/Kolkata

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday moved the Supreme Court against the West Bengal government in the I-PAC money laundering case.

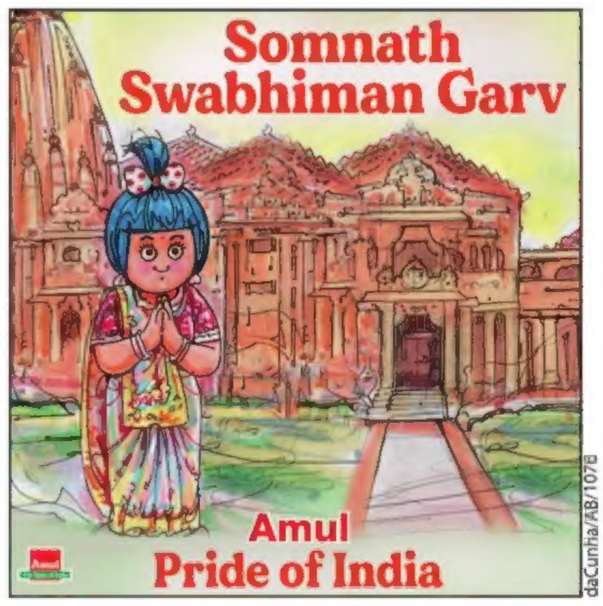
Alleging that its series of raids for the probe was obstructed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the ED sought a CBI probe into the incident, claiming its "right to conduct a fair and independent investigation has been curtailed by the state machinery".

Mamata Banerjee

In a swift counter-move, the West Bengal government filed a caveat in the Supreme Court on Saturday, seeking to ensure that no order is passed without giving it an opportunity to be heard.

The ED on Thursday raided the premises of I-PAC and its director Pratik Jain in Kolkata as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged coal pilferage scam. Mamata has accused the ED of overreach.

The ED on Friday had approached the Calcutta High Court, alleging that the CM took away incriminating documents from the agency's custody. Amid high courtroom drama, the HC adjourned the case to January 14.



From Apartheid-era township to top of tree

GOMESH S @Paarl

JUST about 25km North of Durban, KwaMashu township holds a historical significance in South Africa. It was established under Apartheid to house relocated Black South Africans from Cato Manor. A neighbourhood that is steeped in history — the Mahatma Gandhi House is close by — and houses close to 175,000 people (2011 census) who continue to struggle with poverty, unemployment and crime.

For the last few weeks, the locality has been cherishing a rare moment of joy. One of their sons — Nqobani Mokoena — has turned into a symbol of hope not just for the locality but the whole country. Raised by a single mother, Princess Mokoena, with help from a joint family, the 19-year-old pacer has lit up the ongoing SA20 for Paarl Royals.

It was not easy as a child. Princess worked as an assistant in a firm and struggled to make ends meet and at times supporting Nqobani's cricketing dream seemed impossible. "Buying cricket gear was difficult. My sisters were assisting me, and they were too expensive," Princess recalls. "Kids in the township don't focus on school, don't focus on their talent, and don't respect their family."

Nqobani Mokoena

The teenager found a new life through cricket. Only in its fourth year, just like IPL, SA20 is making cricket a viable career option. P13

EXPRESS READ

Six killed in Mississippi, suspect in custody

Authorities say a person was in custody Saturday after six people were killed in a series of related shootings in eastern Mississippi, United States. Clay County Sheriff Eddie Scott said in a Facebook post that 'multiple innocent lives" were lost "due to violence' in the town of West Point, near the Alabama border. The sheriff told WTVA that six people were killed in three locations. A suspect was in custody and there was no threat to the community, the sheriff wrote on Facebook

Half of world's new Parkinson's cases will be in China: Laureate

RASHMI PATIL @Bengaluru

"IT is estimated that in the next decade, China will have over half of the new cases of Parkinson's disease diagnosed," said Nobel Laureate Prof Randy Schekman. Optimistic about his current research on the disease, the cell biologist was confident that he will leave behind breakthroughs that will make a difference in the lives of those afflicted.

He was speaking at the presentation of Infosys Science Foundation's Infosys Prize 2025, in Bengaluru on Saturday.

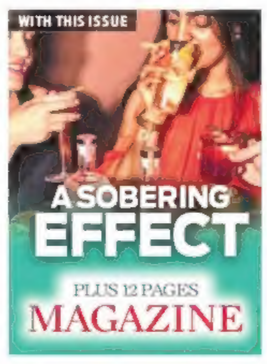
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

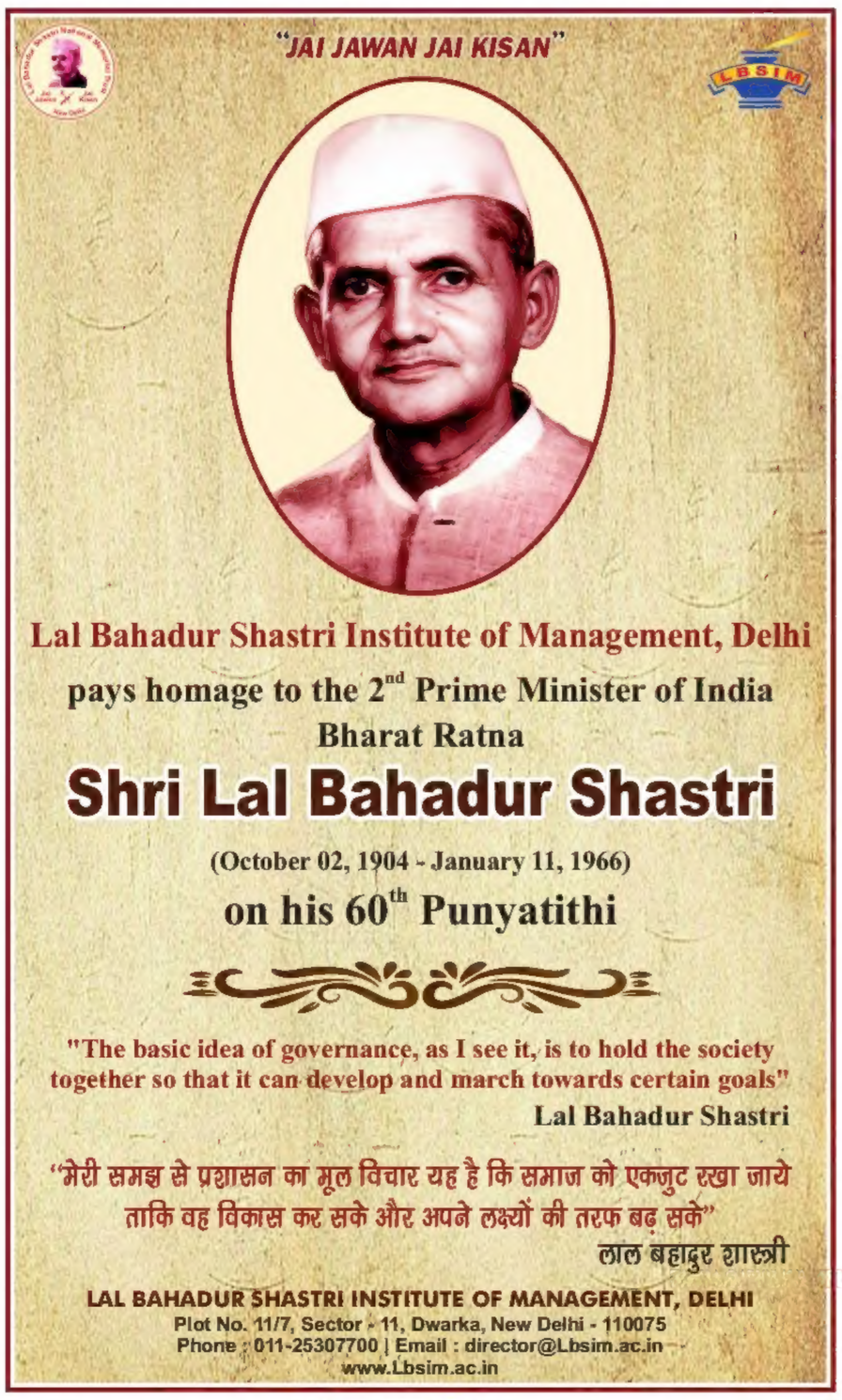
Interior K'taka sees cold wave, B'luru drizzle

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

PEOPLE in Karnataka on Saturday experienced unique weather for this season of the year. While parts of interior Karnataka and north Karnataka experienced severe cold wave conditions, most parts of Bengaluru received a light drizzle. IMD on Saturday issued a cold wave alert for interior and north Karnataka with temperatures dropping by 3-6 degrees Celsius in many regions, including Bidar, Kalaburagi and Bagalkot.

IMD Director, Bengaluru in-charge, N Puviarasan, said Karnataka is experiencing different weather conditions and it is a rare phenomenon. North easterly and north western winds are blowing over north and interior Karnataka and they are experiencing severe cold wave conditions. Some parts of coastal Karnataka and south-interior Karnataka are receiving easterly winds from Bay of Bengal. P7




"JAI JAWAN JAI KISAN"
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Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi
pays homage to the 2nd Prime Minister of India
Bharat Ratna
Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri
(October 02, 1904 - January 11, 1966)
on his 60th Punyatithi
"The basic idea of governance, as I see it, is to hold the society together so that it can develop and march towards certain goals"
Lal Bahadur Shastri
"मेरी समझ से प्रशासन का मूल विचार यह है कि समाज को एकजुट रखा जाये ताकि वह विकास कर सके और अपने लक्ष्यों की तरफ बढ़ सके"
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